

# IOWA JOINT STATEMENT ON HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOLS

by

Education, Health, and Human Services

**Education, Health, and Human Services continue to support school health collaborations across agencies via an interagency school health committee, which brings together state department representatives. The following statements identify challenges necessitating the continuation of joint collaborations.**

Education, health, and human services are linked in fundamental ways with each other and with the destinies of Iowa's children. Because of our state leadership responsibilities for education, health, human services, and other statewide initiatives including, but not limited to, workforce development centers, innovation zones, strong families, and school-based centers, the Interagency Committee continues cooperative efforts between Departments. The Interagency School Health Committee affirms the following:

- *Iowa's children face many compelling educational, health, and developmental challenges that affect their lives and their futures.*

Indicators of these challenges include levels of achievement, literacy, dropouts, violence, drug abuse, injuries, physical and mental illness, developmental disabilities, poverty, poor nutritional status, low levels of physical fitness, and others. These indicators demand continuous assessment of the contributions of education, health and human services in our children's present lives concerning preparing them for productive, responsible and fulfilling futures.

- *To help children meet existing challenges, education, health and human services must be linked in partnership.*

Schools are the only public institutions that touch nearly every young person in Iowa. Schools have a unique opportunity to affect the lives of children and their families, but they cannot address all of our children's needs alone. Health, education, and human service programs must be integrated, and have the support of communities, families and public and private providers to reduce or eliminate health disparities among population groups and ensure access to services.

- *School health programs support the education process, integrate services for disadvantaged and disabled children, and improve all children's prospects.*

Through school health programs, children and their families can develop knowledge, attitudes and environments that promote safety, optimal nutrition, disease prevention, physical fitness, healthy physical, mental, and emotional development, and pregnancy prevention. In addition, they help young people develop assets and problem-solving and decision-making skills discouraging risky behaviors, use of illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

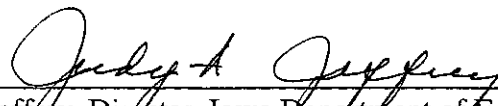
- *Education, Health, and Human Services provide complementary visions that, together, can support our joint efforts in pursuit of continuing prosperity in Iowa.*

The benefits of integrated education, health, and human services can be achieved by working together to create a partnership network of services, both through the school setting and through linkages with all community resources. The collaboration of the state agencies and community resources will advance the health of all Iowans.


Therefore, the Departments agree to continue coordination of the statewide infrastructure to organize existing local school health programs. The following eight priority actions are being addressed to improve student health and academic outcomes.

- *Monitoring healthy behaviors of students through the development of data warehouses.* The Departments of Education and Public Health are developing data warehouses. When possible, data will be linked and shared with each Department to determine current needs and modify the coordinated school health goals.
- *Dedicating administrative support for state staff time directed toward coordinated school health.* Education, Health and Human Services will dedicate a minimum of one staff person to serve as a member of the interagency school health committee.
- *Partnering with state-level agencies and committees interested in advancing coordinated school health.* Interagency team will meet to continue partnerships.
- *Locating or developing model policies to support local implementation of school health policies.* Education, Health and Human Services staff will access existing model policies by communicating with coordinated school health programs in other states, national professional associations, and federal agencies.
- *Disseminating health data and resources to local school districts.* Resources and data will be distributed to local school districts through existing email listservs and newsletters.
- *Developing an external communications plan to educate key stakeholders on the link between healthy students and academic success.* Education, Health and Human Services representatives on the interagency school health committee will facilitate communication between Departments. A communications plan will be developed to link key stakeholders to statewide efforts.
- *Creating awareness of professional development opportunities focusing on school health.* Training opportunities focusing on school health will be disseminated through the communications network developed.
- *Promoting strategies for assuring health care coverage and access to preventive health services for all children.* Education, Health, and Human Services will continue to coordinate efforts connecting families to health care coverage through existing programs.

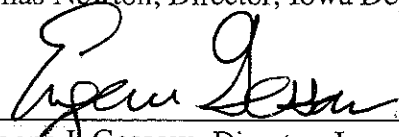
The Departments agree local coordinated school health is an integrated set of planned, sequential, school-affiliated strategies, activities, and services designed to promote the optimal physical, emotional, social, and educational development of students. It promotes continual communication and collaboration among the following services: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling, psychological and social services, healthy school environment, health promotion for staff, family, and community involvement.

  
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9/15/08  
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